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SUBJECT: ARGENTINE SPECULATION OVER A "SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY
ORGANIZATION"

REF: BUENOS AIRES 2463

1. SUMMARY. THERE IS INCREASING PUBLIC SPECULATION IN ARGENTINA
ON THEME OF INCREASED DANGER TO SECURITY OF SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA
BECAUSE OF SOVIET/CUBAN PENETRATION INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA. RECENT
ARTICLE IN "MERCADO," RESPECTED WEEKLY NEWS AND COMMENTARY
MAGAZINE, GOES SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT TIME IN COMING FOR
INTEGRATED FORCES OF REGION, UNDER UNITED STATES COMMAND, TO
PREPARE TO DEFEND SOUTH AFRICA FROM MARXIST MENACE AND INSURE
CONTROL OF SOUTHER MARITIME PASSAGES TO PACIFIC AND INDIAN
OCEAN. END SUMMARY.

2. OVER LAST FEW MONTHS SOME OF ARGENTINA'S LEADING WRITERS
AND THINKERS ON GEOPOLITICS AND STRATEGY HAVE BEGUN TO FOCUS
ON WHAT THEY SEE AS NEW AND SIGNIFICANT THREAT TO SECURITY OF
SOUTH ATLANTIC, AND, THUS, LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WHICH
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BORDER IT. BASIC CAUSE OF THIS INTEREST IS SOVIET/CUBAN

INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, AND MORE RECENTLY THE INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION GIVEN TO RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA VIOLENCE. SUDDENLY, ACCORDING TO VIEW OF THESE OBSERVERS, THE "MARXIST GEOPOLITICAL THREAT" IS NO LONGER FAR AWAY IN THE NORTHERN HEMISPHERE; IT IS JUST ACROSS THE WATER, AND ONE LATIN AMERICAN NATION, CUBA, APPEARS TO HAVE THE CAPACITY TO REACH OUT MILITARILY IN A MANNER HITHERTO UNKNOWN ON THE LATIN AMERICAN SCENE. THE NEW SITUATION IS INTRIGUING AND WORRISOME TO ARGENTINA'S STRATEGIC THINKERS.

3. MOST IMPORTANT RECENT EXPOSITION OF SUBJECT APPEARED IN SEPTEMBER 9 ISSUE OF WEEKLY MAGAZINE "MERCADO," A RESPECTED PUBLICATION WITH INFLUENCE AMONG ARGENTINA'S DECISION-MAKERS AND OPINION MOLDERS. ARTICLE POINTED OUT NEW SITUATION IN AFRICA AS THE RESULT OF CUBAN/SOVIET CONQUEST IN ANGOLA, AND GROWING CONFLICT BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES IN RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA. UNSPOKEN BUT IMPLICIT WAS ASSUMPTION THAT BLACKS ARE INSPIRED BY MARXISM AND THAT BLACK MAJORITY RULE WOULD MEAN ADVANCE OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND CONTROL OVER STRATEGIC SOUTH AFRICAN CONE, WITH DIRE IMPLICATIONS FOR CONTROL OF INDIAN OCEAN AND NEGATIVE IMPACT ON LATIN AMERICAN EAST COAST STATES AND ASSURED PASSAGE AROUND CAPE HORN. "MERCADO" SAW IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF SOVIET NAVAL POWER IN SOUTH ATLANTIC AS PROBABLY RESULT OF "ABANDONMENT OF AFRICA BY KISSINGER."

4. IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE CONTRADICTION TO "ABANDONMENT," ARTICLE STATED THAT FORMATION OF MILITARY PACT FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC IS "SPECIAL PRIORITY" IN U.S. POLICY. IT CLAIMED THAT ONE ONE OF PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF CONVERSATION OF FORMER FONMINISTER RAUL QUIJANO AND SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS DEFENSE OF SOUTH ATLANTIC, AND CONSIDERED THIS CONFIRMED BY SUPPOSED CONCENTRATION ON THIS SUBJECT DURING VISIT OF ADMIRALS ELLIS AND SAGERHOLM FOR PLANNING OF THE UNITAS NAVAL TRAINING EXERCISE. "NO MATTER" THAT U.S. OFFICIALS DENIED THIS, MERCADO SAID; THE PUBLICATION "LATIN AMERICA" WHICH IS EDITED IN WASHINGTON HAD SAID THAT THE VISIT REFLECTED THE URGENCY WASHINGTON ATTACHED TO THE CHANGE IN AFRICAN SITUATION. LATIN AMERICANS APPRECIATE PROBLEM MORE THAN U.S. DOES, AND A "STRATEGIC MILITARY PACT" WITH PARTICIPATION OF

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BRAZIL AND ARGENTINA, IN ASSOCIATION WITH UNITED STATES, URUGUAY AND REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, WAS SEEN AS COMING DEVELOPMENT. CLOSE COOPERATION IN "INTELLIGENCE" MATTERS WITH SOUTH AFRICA WAS URGED, AS WAS SUPPORT FOR SOUTH AFRICA UNDER SLOGAN "SOUTH AFRICA MUST NOT FALL."

5. ARTICLE QUOTED WARNING OF RETIRED GENERAL JUAN GUGLIALMELLI, WELL-KNOWN STRATEGIC COMMENTATOR, THAT BRAZIL WOULD ATTEMPT

TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH A PACT AND DOMINATE, WITH THE BRAZILIAN NAVY CALLING FOR NUCLEAR-POWERED UNITS TO STRENGTHEN MARITIME FORCES FOR STRUGGLE AGAINST SOVIETS. HOWEVER, SUCH REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AND PROBLEMS WOULD HAVE TO BE SUBMERGED BEFORE COMMON EXTERNAL THREAT. PROBLEM OF FALKLAND/MALVINAS ISLANDS DISPUTE WITH BRITAIN WOULD HAVE TO BE SOLVED (IN ARGENTINA'S FAVOR), CONSIDERING IT IS "PLATFORM FOR CONTROL OF STRAITS" AND PROBABLE DEPOSIT OF GREAT RESOURCES.

6. "MERCADO" WARNED OF GREAT DANGERS TO WESTERN WORLD OF SOVIET CONTROL OVER VITAL MARITIME TRAFFIC (I.E., OIL) AROUND THE TWO CAPES, AND MADE IT CLEAR THAT U.S. MUST WAKE UP AND LATIN AMERICANS MUST JOIN TOGETHER IN FACE OF THREAT. EXPOSITION ENDED IN CLAIM THAT "...A MILITARY ALLIANCE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC HAS CEASED TO BE A MERE HYPOTHESIS...THE PARTICIPATION OF ARMED FORCES OF COUNTRIES OF SOUTHERN CONE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE UNITED STATES IS PRACTICALLY A FACT..."

7. COMMENT: SOME MILITARY AND GOVERNMENTAL OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED CONCERN (SEE REFTEL). OTHERS DISMISS WHOLE IDEA OF NEW THREAT TO SOUTH ATLANTIC SECURITY AS HEATED IMAGININGS OF EXTREME ANTI-MARXIST ARMCHAIR GENERALS AND ADMIRALS. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF FONMINISTRY'S OFFICE OF LATIN AMERICAN AFFAIRS TOLD EMBOFF THAT IDEA OF MILITARY ALLIANCE FOR SOUTH ATLANTIC IS BEING PUSHED BY BRAZILIAN NAVY, WHICH SEES IT AS MEANS OF ACQUIRING ADVANCED U.S. SHIPS. IT SEEMS MORE LIKELY TO US, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS BEING PUSHED BY ARGENTINE NAVY FOR SAME PURPOSE. SAME OFFICIAL SAID THAT FONMINISTRY HAS NOT CONSIDERED SUBJECT AND THAT FEW IN MINISTRY TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.

8. IN SUM, IDEA OF A SOUTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION, IN WHICH U.S. WOULD PLAY LEADING ROLE, IS BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY BY SOME ELEMENTS OF OPINION IN ARGENTINA, WHILE OTHERS DISMISS CONFIDENTIAL

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IDEA AS UNNECESSARY AND IMPRACTICAL. DISCUSSION IN SERIOUS PUBLICATIONS SUCH AS "MERCADO," HOWEVER, WILL STIMULATE MORE INTEREST IN SUBJECT, AND WE SHOULD BE HEARING MORE ABOUT IT. INDEED, AS A FOLLOW-UP TO ITS ARTICLE "MERCADO" HAS ALREADY REQUESTED USIS ASSISTANCE IN OBTAINING ON-THE-RECORD RESPONSES FROM USG OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT U.S. POLICY AND ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SOUTH ATLANTIC AREA. STATEMENT OF REAR ADMIRAL JAMES SAGERHOLM, COMMANDING THE U.S. TASK FORCE CARRYING OUT UNITAS OPERATION WITH ARGENTINE NAVY, WAS PUBLISHED IN LOCAL PRESS SEPTEMBER 6. THE ADMIRAL WAS QUOTED AS SAYING "MARITIME LINES OF COMMUNICATION IN SOUTH ATLANTIC ARE VITAL. EACH CHANGE IN POLITICAL SITUATION IN THIS AREA MODIFIES ITS STABILITY, AND THIS CHANGE, OBVIOUSLY, IS IN RELATION TO PRESENCE OF COMMUNIST FORCES IN SOUTH ATLANTIC, WHICH CREATES A NEW FOCUS OF STRATEGIC CONCERN." STATEMENT WILL

ADD TO CONVICTION OF SOME THAT U.S. IS INTERESTED IN A REGIONAL
COUNTER-EFFORT OF SOME SORT. HILL UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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